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Sen. Kuipers proposes legislation to encourage Michigan biofuel use

LANSING – Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, and other state lawmakers introduced legislation this week that spurs renewable fuels use, promotes Michigan agriculture and helps the nation become energy independent.

“Just as President Bush has called on the nation to research and invest in fuel that can be grown here at home, we must do more in Michigan to encourage biofuel production here,” Kuipers said. “This helps Michigan’s farmers while improving the environment.”

The bipartisan legislative package would promote and encourage use of E85, a fuel blend that is 85 percent ethanol, and biodiesel, which contains at least 5 percent diesel fuel derived from crops. Senators heard testimony today about the need for the legislation and are expected to act quickly on it.

Senate Bill 1075, which Kuipers introduced, would require the Michigan Department of Management and Budget to install pumps and related equipment to supply fuel to the state-owned vehicle fleet with alternative fuels. Other bills in the package would require that the state fleet use alternative-fuel vehicles.

Although GM and Ford are heavily investing in the production of E85 vehicles, there are four pumps dispensing the fuel in Michigan, while Minnesota has 198 pumps and Illinois has 104 pumps state wide.

SB 1075 has been referred to the Senate Technology and Energy Committee.

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